

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 02496 251202Z

53

ACTION EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1833

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2496

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, CG

SUBJECT: PANAM - AIR ZAIRE

REF KINSHASA 2465

1. MINISTER OF TRANSPORT INONGA ASKED ME TO SEE HIM
MARCH 25 "ON URGENT AND GRAVE MATTERM" HE SAID HE HAD TO
SPEAK FRANKLY AND BLUNTLY AS FRIEND OF US. HE APPRECIATED
PANAM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO AIR ZAIRE AND WANTED IT TO
CONTINUE BUT HUTT HAD TO GO. SPEAKING WITH EMOTION, HE
SAID HUTT WAS SABOTEUR, RACIST, INSOLENT, NON-COOPERATIVE
AND, WHETHER HE WERE COMPETENT OR INCOMPETENT, IT WAS NOW
IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO STAY. HE ALLEGED HUTT WAS PLAYING
SOME ZAIROIS AGAINST OTHER ZAIROIS; THAT HE HAD FAILED TO
STRAIGHTEN OUT FINANCES; THAT HE HAD TRAVELLED TO
EUROPE WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION; THAT HE HAD NOT ATTENDED
MEETINGS CONVOKED BY MINISTER; THAT HE HAD NOT SUBMITTED
REPORTS CALLED FOR BY CONTRACT AND NOW HE HAD WRITTEN,
BLACK ON WHITE, THAT HE HAD HAD MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO
DO THAN MEEET WITH MINISTER. HE HAD ALSO SAID THAT AS
DELEGUE GENERALE HE COULD FOLLOW MINISTER'S GENERAL
DIRECTIONS, BUT THAT AS DIRECTOR GENERAL AND HEAD OF TEAM,
HE WAS BOUND BY CONTRACT, WHICH CONTRACT CLEARLY STATED
THAT HE WAS RESPONSIBLE TO MINISTER TO MINISTER OF TRANSPORT. A
POINT HUTT OVERLOOKED.

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PAGE 02 KINSHA 02496 251202Z

2. RACIST CHARGE WAS PROVEN BY HUTT'S FIRING OF COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR ON GROUNDS COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR HAD HAD SOCIAL CONTACT WITH ZAIROIS. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING HE WANTED ME TO CABLE WASHINGTON AND PANAM TELLING THEM NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL IS URGENTLY NEEDED.

3. I REPLIED THAT IF GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE WANTED HUTT REPLEACED , HE SHOULD BE REPLACED. I KNEW NOTHING OF ALLEGED RACISM BUT IF THAT WERE MINISTER'S CONCLUSION, THAT IN ITSELF WAS SUFFICIENT. HOWEVER I THOUGH HUTT WAS ON STRONGER GROUND WHEN HE ARGUED THAT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS TEAM LEADER AND DIRECTOR GENERAL WERE DIFFERENT FROM HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS DELEQUE GENERALE.

4. MINISTER DISAGREED AND EXPLAINED AT LENGTH NEW SYSTEM HERE FOR DELEGUES GENERALES TO REPLACE DIRECTORS GENERAL, SUBJECT TO REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE CONTROL, MINISTERIAL CONTRAOL AND POLITCAL BUREAU SUPERVISION. I SAID IN THAT CASE THERE WAS FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE BETWEEN CONTRACT PROVISIONS AND NEW GOZ SYSTEM. I SAID THIS WAS ISSUE BETWEEN CONTRACTING PARTIES AND SUGGESTED THAT HE ASK VICE PRESIDENT RICE OF PANAM TO COME TO KINSHASA TO CLARIFY SITUATION AND, IF NECESSARY, TO REVISE CONTRACT. INONGA SIAD HE DID NOT WISH CONTRACT REVISED; HE WANTED NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL AND HE WOULD GIVE NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL NEEDED AUTHORITY. HE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE WELL FOR RICE TO COME SO THAT ALL PARTIES WOULD UNDERSTAND SITUATION AND HOW IT WOULD WORK. AS I LEFT, I URGED INONGA TO DISCUSS HIS DECISION WITH HUTT LATER THIS MORNING AND HE SAID HE WOULD DO SO. I SAID THERE MIGHT BE VALID EXPLAATIONS FOR SOME OF CHARGES. HE REITERATED HUTT HAD TO GO BUT THAT HE WANTED TO KEEP PANAM CONTRACT.

5. ACTION: DEPARTMENT PLEASE INFORM RICE. WE WILL DISCUSS WITH GATT, CECCHET AND HUTT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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